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ABSTRACT

This digest highlights features of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), explains how to use the system most effectively, and offers suggestions on how health and physical education teacher education faculty can present and use the ERIC system to supplement classroom instruction. Following a description of how resources in ERIC can be helpful to teachers and teacher candidates, a discussion is presented on what teacher candidates should know in order to use ERIC effectively. Some suggested activites for classroom follow-up are listed. (JD)

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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER FOR HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER CANDIDATES

ERIC Digest #9

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CLEARINGHOUSE ON TEACHER EDUCATION

ERIC DIGEST 9

1986

The Importance of The Educational Resources Information Center For Health and Physical Education Teacher Candidates

The ERIC system can be a vital resource for health and physical education, offering not only research findings but practical ideas and information that HPRD teacher candidates can use throughout their professional careers. This digest highlights ERIC's features and how to use the system most effectively. It offers suggestions on how HPRD teacher education faculty can present and use the ERIC system.

What Is ERIC?

It's the world's largest educational database—used by researchers, education professionals, and policy makers around the world. It's the Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC for short. ERIC can expand HPRD teacher candidates' knowledge of the profession, broaden their career horizons, and give a lifelong resource for professional competence improvement. This digest highlights ERIC's features, explains how to use the system most effectively, and offers suggestions on how HPRD teacher education faculty can present and use the ERIC system in their classrooms.

Why Do HPRD Teacher Candidates Need To Use ERIC?

ERIC serves as the most comprehensive source of information on health, physical education, recreation and dance for teachers and teacher candidates.

Accessibility. The largest educational database in the world, ERIC contains more than 500,000 documents and journal articles from all areas of education. These include research reports on exercise physiology, elementary physical education curriculum guides, AAHPERD conference papers, and pamphlets on toxic shock. The system is accessible either by computer or by using the print indexes published in two monthly indexes, *Resources in Education* and *Current Index to Journals in Education*, found in research libraries nationwide. The indexes provide full bibliographic citations and abstracts for each entry, along with subject and author indexes. The full text of ERIC documents is available on microfiche in the library collections. Computer searching of the database is also available in many libraries and on home computers.

Lifelong Resource. Learning the ERIC system gives HPRD teacher candidates access to materials for term papers, bibliographies, and other research assignments. But more importantly, it offers a lifelong entry to the education profession's comprehensive resources. In addition to research findings, ERIC documents and journal articles contain many practical "ideas that work"—suggestions on sports management, curriculum enhancements, handling discipline problems, and information on current educational and professional issues such as teenage pregnancy, merit pay, basic instruction, and teacher evaluation.

Multiple Viewpoints. ERIC allows comprehensive information-gathering in all disciplines connected with education because unlike a single publication or one author's perspective, it contains many viewpoints. For example, a single search of ERIC on the subject "classroom discipline" will yield views of teachers, coaches, principals, education faculty, and researchers.

Career Development. The literature in the database also helps HPRD teacher candidates obtain comprehensive information on career development. From certification requirements in the various states and international education opportunities, to staff development programs and innovative products and techniques, all can be found in ERIC.

Why Should HPRD Education Faculty Teach ERIC in the Classroom?

Faculty have special areas of expertise to draw from when teaching the ERIC system. A faculty member can help the student find different theories, practices, specific researchers, and organizations knowledgeable about the subject. Thus, guidance from a faculty member helps students refine the search questions and determine how to locate specific information.

Classroom assignments that follow a library orientation will assure a more thorough understanding of how to conduct an ERIC search. Learning how to use the system without practice is like learning to drive a car without starting the engine. Students need someone knowledgeable in the subject area to pose specific teaching-career situations for which the ERIC system would be helpful. In this way, using ERIC can become an integral part of teachers' professional lives.

What Should HPRD Teacher Candidates Know to Use ERIC Effectively?

To use the ERIC system effectively, HPRD teacher education candidates should know three things: how to form the "search question," how to conduct a search of the print indexes or ask for a computer search, and how to locate the full text of the documents and journal articles.

Defining the Question. Both print index and computer searches begin with defining the "search" question. The more precisely the question is posed, the more "on target" the resources from the system will be. ERIC indexes each document and article using a controlled vocabulary found in the *Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors*. For example, a question like, "What do good elementary physical education teachers do?" is far too broad. But, "What are some effective *teaching strategies for fifth grade physical education programs?*" yields a list of documents that are indexed by both descriptors *Teaching*

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Methods Grade 5 and *Physical Education*. Exercises are available to give the students practice using the *Thesaurus* (Houston 1981).

Conducting the Search. Using the print indexes is advantageous because it can easily be done independently, and unlike a computer search, which usually involves a fee, the manual search is free. Using the print indexes is also the easiest way to locate resources if only a few documents are needed on a specific topic (ERIC Clearinghouse on Social Studies 1981). Other advantages of the manual search are the "serendipitous find" and the ability to change direction without expensive computer manipulations.

To conduct a print index search, the students must be thoroughly familiar with the RIE and CIJE journals, which contain the indexes, abstracts, and ordering information needed to locate the full text of the document or journal article. Specifically, they need to know how to use the author and subject indexes, how to interpret the information contained in the abstract, and where to go once they identify the ED (ERIC Document) and the EJ (ERIC journal) numbers for the materials they want to read.

A computer search is useful for doing an in-depth literature review or to locate minor descriptors or identifiers not listed in the *Thesaurus* (Laubacher 1983). Computer searches are available in most research libraries and in state department of education offices. The database can also be searched using a home computer (Klausmeier 1984). Large school districts often have ERIC computer search capability, and students should know that this resource may be available to them as teachers.

Locating the Text. After locating the document (ED) numbers and the journal (EJ) numbers in RIE and CIJE, the students must learn to locate the documents in the microfiche collection and the journals in the serials collection. If a journal is unavailable in a library, a reprint of the article can be ordered from University Microfilms International, Article Reprint Service, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Paper copies of most microfiche documents can be ordered from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service, 3900 Wheeler Ave., Alexandria, VA 22304.

Some Suggested Activities for Classroom Follow-Up

1. Use the *Thesaurus* to locate index terms for an abstract that had been previously indexed (i.e., an abstract from RIE). This will increase awareness about using a controlled vocabulary.
2. Compile a bibliography of recent documents and journal articles in the ERIC system on a specific topic such as testing motor skills.
3. Locate recent HPRD curriculum guides to update resources in the school curriculum lab.
4. Debate a controversial issue such as teacher testing, using materials in the ERIC system, to increase awareness about the diversity of the system.
5. Prepare lesson plans using ideas retrieved from the ERIC system.
6. Prepare a policy paper on a controversial subject, such as merit pay for teachers.
7. Give an oral presentation about the impact of educational reform efforts such as teacher career ladders.
8. Locate statistics about teacher shortages in a particular state.

References

Many of the following references—those identified with an EJ or ED number—have been abstracted and are in the ERIC data base. The journal articles should be available at most research libraries. The documents (citations with an ED number) are available on microfiche in ERIC microfiche collections at over 700 locations. Documents can also be ordered through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service. Call (800) 227-3742 for price and order information. For a list of ERIC collections in your area, or for information on submitting documents to ERIC, contact the ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 610, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 293-2450.

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ERIC

Educational Resources Information Center: The nationwide information system initiated in 1966 by the U.S. Department of Education. ERIC is the largest and most frequently used education data base in the world.